



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FRONT LINES

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Indonesia is moving from
U.S. aid recipient to partner.
See how on pages 7-10.



Kuntoro Mangkusubroto
is helping to turn Indonesia
into a world leader.

Photo by Danumurthi Mahendra, USAID

Development Called Up to Foreign Policy Big Leagues

By Kelly Ramundo

“Today, I am announcing our new U.S. Global Development Policy—the first of its kind by an American administration. It’s rooted in America’s enduring commitment to the dignity and potential of every human being. And it outlines our new approach and the new thinking that will guide our overall development efforts, including the plan that I promised last year and that my administration has delivered to pursue the Millennium Development Goals.”

With those words, President Barack Obama, in front of the U.N. summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) late

see **POLICY** on page 5 ►



U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: DEVELOPMENT GETS “FIRM FOOTING”

On Sept. 28, less than a week after President Barack Obama unveiled his landmark global development policy at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals summit, several administration heavyweights jointly took the stage at the annual U.S. Global Leadership Coalition Conference to discuss the policy’s implications. Left to right, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah; Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; moderator Frank Sesno, director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University; Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner; and Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO Daniel Yohannes collectively spoke of the strategic importance of development in U.S. foreign and national security policy as well as how their respective departments and agencies would collaborate to, in the words of Clinton, “put development on a firm footing and leave it there.” Watch the entire event or read the transcript at www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/09/148304.htm.

FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES:

Peace and Security

After years of political isolation, Albania courts tourists with choice endorsements SEE PAGE 13

Governing Justly and Democratically

Iraqi officials and citizens meet to resolve conflicts and concerns SEE PAGE 16

Investing in People

How education impacts all sectors of developing nations: an interview with USAID’s David Barth SEE PAGE 2

Economic Growth

Can a small briquette revolutionize rice farming in Bangladesh? SEE PAGE 12

Humanitarian Assistance

One hundred million more women to receive family planning services in Africa, South Asia SEE PAGE 5

A ‘Science Mosh Pit’ for Innovative Development

By Steven Gale

NEW YORK—If a super-sized and lively crowd is any barometer of an event’s appeal, then the USAID/New York Academy of Sciences-sponsored Science, Technology, and Innovation Forum in New York City on Sept. 22 was a shock-wave. More than 175 people jammed into a waiting-list-only hotel ballroom, adjacent to the stately U.N. buildings, which was converted overnight into an interactive science fair for development.

They came to see first-hand how science and technology can solve tough development challenges with game-changing innovations and the latest technologies such as making electricity from ordinary dirt or using cell phones to reject life-threatening, look-alike, fake medicines now being hawked throughout Africa. Forum

guests included ministers from nine countries, along with leading world-class scientists, social entrepreneurs, academic faculty, development lab directors, private sector CEOs, and foundation heads.

However, the undeniable star power—and fun quotient—came from the 20-plus inspiring, mostly young innovators, who showed up to let guests “test drive” their products.

These innovators came from as far away as Africa and India by plane, as close by as lower Manhattan by subway, and from nearby Boston by bus. They also came by truck as products like a full-sized, pedal-powered washing machine—the *Bicilavadora*—and a high-speed, bicycle-mounted corn husker were not easily getting through

see **SCIENCE** on page 4 ►

US, Ireland Tout ‘1,000 Days’ for Child Nutrition

By Kimberly Flowers

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton recently urged world leaders, corporations, and civil society organizations to step up global efforts to improve child nutrition, warning of irreversible damage to those who don’t receive proper nutrition during their first 1,000 days of life.

“We have to be ready in our partnerships to increase our support for countries struggling with undernutrition, and we have to align our programs and our funding with their plans instead of creating parallel programs,” Clinton said before a room of hundreds of development l

see **NUTRITION** on page 6 ►



Photo by Rizwan Tibassum, AFP

Pakistani technicians install a wind turbine on the island of Kharochhan. The tiny island has advanced far beyond the rest of Pakistan, powering homes and businesses with wind turbines, saving the ecosystem and improving the quality of life. For more on how technology is helping to address challenges faced by some of the world’s poorest countries, see page 4.

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Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

David Barth

Interview with David Barth, Director, Office of Education, USAID

USAID's Office of Education is responsible for an education sector that consists of programs in more than 56 countries and more than \$1 billion in funding for fiscal year 2010. Office Director David Barth recently discussed how the Agency is working to improve education in developing countries with FrontLines Managing Editor Kelly Ramundo.

Q: What is USAID's education approach?

BARTH: First of all, USAID is the global leader in educational programming—particularly from a bilateral perspective. We have active programs in basic education in 56 countries, with an additional 67 higher-education partnerships in a number of additional countries.

Our approach is two-fold: one, to build strategic alliances and two, to apply the latest, most innovative tools to solve problems in education that can be supported by evidence. That often means working with national governments, the private sector, civil society, other donors, and communities to collaborate and implement innovative solutions to challenging education problems.

Our principal concern is in ensuring positive learning outcomes for all children, particularly for the underserved

and marginalized. So as we look at a problem, our concern is more about results—to develop effective strategies and interventions on improving learning for children. This seemingly simple objective defines our approach to programming.

Q: Is this a shift from the way education was done in the past?

BARTH: I think the quality imperative has always been central to our approach. Globally, major strides have been made to improve access to education. Over the last decade, we have moved many millions of children into classrooms.

Where we have failed those children is in not always providing them a quality education once they arrive in the classroom. Enrolling on the first day is not enough. A child in school, without a motivated, qualified teacher and learning materials has very little chance of learning.

So our emphasis has to be on giving schools, school

administrators, teachers, parents, and children, the tools they need to ensure that children learn.

Q: What are some of the tools that USAID is using to monitor if the education system is actually working?

BARTH: That's an important question. It all starts with understanding the problem. So monitoring whether or not these children are learning is a necessary precursor of being able to program intelligent solutions.

We've developed early-grade reading assessments, early-grade math assessments, and special tools for looking at the effectiveness of school management—along with partners, the World Bank, Hewlett, and others—that we're now deploying throughout the world, particularly in Africa where a number of countries have gone to scale using these early grade assessments to better understand whether or not their schools are functioning properly.

Once you have data—once you have employed this low-cost, fast, school-specific tool, then you can generate the information that is needed to empower communities. This can help you intelligently train teachers—as opposed to providing blanket training to every teacher. You can then understand the day-to-day management problems that principals and administrators are facing.

Q: So these tools are essentially achievement tests?

BARTH: Well, they're not the traditional, end-of-the-year, high-stakes, written achievement tests, which we think—particularly in the developing world—don't provide very useful data in accurately assessing gaps in children's learning.

What makes these assessment tools different is they're oral, as opposed to written. And when you're dealing with a child in the developing world who has been in school for maybe just two years, if you give them a

written test, you are probably not testing what they have learned; you are testing their ability to read the test.

Q: Is there a specific country that has really latched onto these tools?

BARTH: We're seeing it in a lot of places: Liberia, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia. We've seen major investments in the assessment and we've seen some very intelligent and thoughtful programming around the results.

In the past, we've known how to achieve small, incremental gains in literacy. Here we think we have a tool that can help communities make a much larger, quantitative leap.

Q: What are the benefits, specifically, of focusing on educating women and girls?

see **BARTH** on page 14 ►

CALLING ALL SHUTTERBUGS

FrontLines will be holding a photo contest and wants to see your best images that showcase USAID development activities in action.

We want to see your most captivating shots. Think climate change, maternal health, water and sanitation, education, democracy, science and technology, disaster aid—no sector is off limits. Your photo should help illustrate why and how USAID is working in the world to extend a helping hand to people striving to make their lives better.

A panel of USAID employees will review all the entries and declare a winner. And the winning photograph will appear prominently in an upcoming issue of *FrontLines* as well as on the Agency's website.

Go to www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/photo_contest.html for additional rules and reproduction rights information.

Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind.

- All photos must be submitted digitally, with .jpg files preferred. They must also be shot in high resolution, at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) or approximately 1 megabyte.
 - Include the date and location for the photograph as well as a brief description of what is happening in the image.
 - Any *FrontLines* reader can submit an image, including employees of NGOs and contractors.
 - One entry per person.
 - Have fun and be creative.
- Send all entries to frontlines@usaid.gov with the subject: Photo Contest. Any questions about the contest should be sent to the same e-mail address.

THE DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS NOV. 10. GOOD LUCK!

HAVE YOUR SAY!

FrontLines loves to hear from our readers!

To submit a letter to the editor, e-mail frontlines@usaid.gov with the subject: Letter to the Editor.

Letters may be sent by regular mail to this address:
U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs
Attn: FrontLines
Room 6.10-011
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20523-6100

Please include your full name, address, and e-mail. Letters should be 200 words or fewer, and all are subject to editing.

MISSION OF THE MONTH



Workers haul water to the roof of a middle school in FATA rehabilitated by the local community with USAID support.

‘Ashar’ Improves Schools in Pakistan’s Tribal Areas

By Zack Taylor

Challenge

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in northwest Pakistan is considered to be one of the most unsafe places in the world.

It is where Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden is believed to be hiding. And U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan say that much of the plotting for attacks against international troops in that country originates in FATA.

Everyday activities, such as pursuing an education, are risky endeavors. There are reports of schools being closed down and destroyed by militants. Still, people who live in the FATA communities of Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, Bannu, and North Waziristan have banded together to prove that education can flourish even amid adversity. Their response borrows from an age-old tradition called *ashar*.

Innovative Response

Ashar is when communities collectively contribute to meet the pressing needs of an individual or family, especially in FATA and frontier regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Long before the introduction of farming equipment, construction tools, or banks, for example, *ashar* banded communities together during harvest

season to construct homes or provide financial assistance to those in need.

Last year, USAID helped revive this tradition in FATA, mobilizing parents to improve their children’s schools and their learning environment. USAID’s Links to Learning: Education Support to Pakistan program (or Ed-Links) encouraged parents and siblings of students to come together and repair school buildings while providing financial and technical support.

“This is the first time that we have gathered together on behalf of education for the collective interest of the community,” said Sher Andaz, the leader, or *malik*, of one participating community.

“Projects included painting walls; fixing electrical fittings, doors, windows, and furniture; replacing blackboards; strengthening boundaries; cleaning up courtyards; and improving sanitation in the schools,” Andaz said.

“I’m illiterate, so I don’t understand much about education,” added Mohammad Nawaz, whose son, Jahanzeb, is a student at the school. “But through *ashar*, I can still contribute to my son’s education by helping improve the condition of his school. I hope my son will enjoy his studies now.”

In most cases, men worked at the school while women cooked meals and prepared a feast to

PAKISTAN



celebrate the project’s completion. At one school in the extremely conservative Frontier Region of Bannu, women insisted on helping paint the walls and boundaries. For the first time, fathers and husbands allowed them to step outside their homes and work in public.

Results

Through *ashar*, passive and disinterested community members became active and eager agents of change. Over six months, community members improved the learning environment for 13,985 middle and secondary school students studying in 46 schools in FATA.

“I’m surprised at such high participation by the community since this is harvest season,” said Hamdullah, whose daughter, Yasmeen, studies in Class 10. “I didn’t expect people to leave their work in the field for the school.”

Not only are students benefiting from an improved learning environment, but enrollment has increased significantly in beneficiary schools, said Sabr Ullah, a father from Madyana.

“There is strength in unity,” he said. “No one could have accomplished this alone, but together we did it in just three days. I’ve asked parents not to stop here but to dedicate a few days each month to improve the education of their children.”

After the success of *ashar* in FATA, Ed-Links expanded the model to the Malakand Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where thousands of families have gradually returned home to rebuild their lives after spending the past year displaced by internal conflict. These communities are eager to repair schools, hospitals, and other public facilities destroyed by insurgents. They say they are driven by the need

see PAKISTAN on page 15 ►

INSIGHTS

FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH



Just recently, I heard one of the most accurate, compelling, and constructive critiques of international development ever delivered by an American president.

“No objective supporter of foreign aid can be satisfied with the existing program—actually a multiplicity of programs. Bureaucratically fragmented, awkward and slow, its administration is diffused over a haphazard and irrational structure covering at least four departments and several other agencies. The program is based on a series of legislative measures and administrative procedures conceived at different times and for different purposes, many of them now obsolete, inconsistent, and unduly rigid, and thus unsuited for our present needs and purposes.”

Those comments, stark in their candor and grave in their assessment, depict a development infrastructure that’s failed to meet its mission.

They are also nearly 50 years old.

Those words are from a letter President John F. Kennedy sent to Congress back in 1961, calling for significant changes to the development infrastructure in this country. It was that very same letter that ushered in our nation’s first global development strategy, and it led to the creation of USAID.

Last month, at the United Nations General Assembly, I saw another sitting president deliver a comprehensive strategy for international development. President Barack Obama outlined his vision for elevating the role of development, placing it on equal footing with diplomacy and defense.

The president’s speech and its accompanying policy directive describe development as a strategic, economic, and moral imperative for our country—a means to address pressing inequalities in the global economy and an opportunity to advance universal rights and freedoms.

He called for a renewed, modern, rebuilt USAID to carry out that vision.

That message has been echoed throughout the highest levels of this administration.

Recently, I shared a stage with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Chief Bob Gates, and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, as well as Millennium Challenge Corporation CEO Daniel Yohannes (see photo, page 1).

We had different perspectives on the challenges of development, but we all agreed on the necessity of moving past the status quo in order to achieve the results we hope to achieve.

That urgency underlies USAID Forward, our agenda of reforms which will help shape USAID into the world’s premier development agency; an agency that is truly fit for its ambitious and meaningful purpose.

In the end, I believe these reforms—supported at the highest levels of our government—will represent the most significant transformation to USAID since the Agency’s founding, helping us create lasting, sustainable, meaningful growth in our partner countries.

President Kennedy founded this agency, and provided us with the means to first address the world’s development challenges.

President Obama has helped to advance and elevate the role of development, and supported a robust and prominent role for a reformed USAID.

Now we must execute this vision, so that we can partner with countries to create the conditions where our assistance is no longer needed. ★

USAID AT UNGA

‘JUST DO IT!’

By Steven Gale

NEW YORK—Those were the final words USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah told the invited guests and science fair exhibitors at the Sept. 22 Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation, co-hosted by the New York Academy of Science, during the annual meeting of the U.N. General Assembly here last month.

He was, of course, referring to the well-known Nike slogan to get things done and that resonated well with the 19 exhibitor teams from across the United States, and from Africa and India. The exhibitors had come to showcase their cutting-edge products and technologies aimed at improving the lives and livelihoods of some of the poorest people around the globe.

Shah pointed out that, to have a lasting impact, today’s innovations must be ultra low-cost; designed from the start with a plan to scale up, a deep and respectful knowledge about the intended customer, and, above all, an optimistic, non-stop determination to make a difference in the developing world. Without exception, every exhibitor team nodded agreement with Shah.

Following a “speed showcasing” in which the teams were given a chance to pitch their products to guests and fellow exhibitors in 1-minute spots, the exhibitors scrambled to their display tables to show their stuff.

Products ranged widely from small soda or beer bottle caps that could detect surface skin changes indicating underlying heart problems at rural clinics, to a full-sized washing machine powered by a folding bicycle, allowing women in Peru to triple their income from hand washing clothes.

Speaking of water, one product that caught everyone’s attention was a small, \$35 foot pump sold locally that allows small-scale farmers in Africa to irrigate up to 2 acres of land, and freeing them from reliance on one, or possibly two, rainy seasons. With the pumps, they can grow high-value crops all year long, feed their families, and sell the rest. Another water-related product—the root hydration system—lets salted, brackish, and polluted

Amos Winter, right, a PhD candidate in mechanical engineering, spent three weeks in January testing the Leveraged Freedom Chair in East Africa. The chair allows the disabled to travel over rough terrain in the developing world.

Photo by Joseph Kisyocky



water flow through a simple pipe system that can desalinate, purify, and filter contaminated groundwater. The resulting water vapor in the pipes hydrates a variety of food-bearing plants using virtually no energy.

Need to build or reconstruct an hurricane-ravaged earthen dam or provide a growing rural community with drinking water without reliable maps or aerial photography to chart out the terrain? No helicopter either? Dang! What you need is Aerial Kite Photography, with which a kite, camera rig, and camera (all costing less than \$300), produce the accurate pictures you need with shutter speeds and camera rotation controlled by a small hand-held transmitter. Just don’t launch during a storm, of course.

Need electricity for that transmitter, to charge your cell phone, or to power some LED lights so you can study at night? A team has solved your problem, too. An estimated 500 million people in Africa live without power, which sparked (no pun) a team to come up with a novel, dirt-powered device that relies on the normal metabolism of organic material in the soil to produce modest amounts of electricity.

Another top draw at the forum (which later won the prestigious *Wall Street Journal*’s 2010 Technology Innovation Award) was the Leveraged Freedom Chair, which uses a simple set of gears to dramatically increase the mobility needs of disabled in the developing world by allowing travel over rough terrain. Cost? Less than \$200 and made of simple bicycle parts so it can easily be manufactured and repaired in remote locations.

Other “stars” of the forum included a solar-powered

autoclave to sterilize instruments in rural clinics; a bike-powered corn sheller that works up to 40 times faster than hand shelling and also charges your cell phone; a cook stove that uses surplus, energy-dense pine needles to produce a clean, efficient way to cook food; and an award-winning, easy-to-service

prosthetic—the Jaipur-Knee—that empowers low-income amputees to live productive and hopeful lives. ★

Watch the presenters exhibit their products and read more about them at: www.usaid.gov/scitech/.

SCIENCE from page 1

airport screening, let alone the usually iron-clad security perimeter that surrounds the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) meetings.

The forum was kicked off by Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, co-principal investigator of USAID-supported clinical trials in South Africa using the microbicide gel Tenofovir to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission in women (see August 2010 *FrontLines*, page 1). This landmark trial was the first step to establish the effectiveness of antiretroviral drugs to prevent HIV transmission and, as Dr. Karim quickly pointed out, to also prevent genital herpes transmission. She spoke of the unique partnership between clinical researchers, the private sector, and public health officials, and reminded guests that additional studies, and requisite funding, are urgently needed.

Ellis Rubinstein, president of the New York Academy of Sciences, told attendees about the historical role the Academy has played since its founding in 1817 to tackle society’s global challenges through science-based solutions. The Academy, Rubinstein said, is fully committed, “...through initiatives like Scientists Without Borders (SWB), to develop new ways to

leverage the global power of scientific innovation in order to improve the quality of life for the world’s poorest people.”

His Academy colleague and SWB Executive Director, Dr. Shaifali Puri, focused on the need for more cross-sector global collaboration and increased use of innovative Web platforms to engage a widening pool of problem solvers anywhere in the world. “We must develop and apply new technologies and approaches to address human development needs, seeking breakthroughs that can help leapfrog development problems,” Puri said.

Just before breaking for the science fair, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah highlighted the need to take a new approach to development—one that unleashes the full power of science, technology, and innovation to make a lasting difference.

Many of today’s global challenges are shared, Shah noted, requiring “solutions that cross borders, sectors, and disciplines. Addressing these issues cannot be met without appropriate scientific knowledge and technological expertise.”

He also spoke about an unprecedented spirit growing within USAID and among our

partners and host countries to champion innovation and set the highest goals imaginable.

“We will target our investments in areas where we can have the greatest impacts, improving the lives of millions, not hundreds, nor even thousands,” Shah said. He spoke about USAID’s plans to unveil a set of grand development challenges and asked guests to envision a world where innovations are developed cheaply, produced indigenously, and are scalable and sustainable. Just look around the room, he remarked, and see for yourself.

If the space was somewhat cramped, the attendee feedback reflected no discomfort. One formal speaker remarked that, “The blow-back from that event has been remarkable. Tough international players came up to me not only at the event, but in the evening at the U.N. Foundation, to tell me how extraordinary it was. That was their word: ‘extraordinary.’”

And, as the forum drew to a close and guests reluctantly slipped out to make their next engagement, one seasoned event-goer whispered to a colleague that this was “simply the most interesting and fun” event she had attended in years, calling it “an un-UNGA experience.” ★



A bike-powered corn sheller works up to 40 times faster than hand shelling.

Photo by Luigi Crespo, USAID

Alliance to Focus on Family Planning in Africa, Asia

By Sandra Jordan

A five-year, public/private global alliance dedicated to family planning and maternal and child health will join the efforts of USAID, the U.K. Department for International Development, the Australian Agency for International Development, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In announcing the alliance, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.K. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Australian Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, and Melinda Gates showcased the commitment of nations, organizations, and private donors to the issue during a United Nations event Sept. 22.

The alliance will aim to make family planning services available to an additional 100 million women, increase the numbers of skilled birth attendants and facility-based deliveries, and expand post-natal care for women and newborns by 2015.

It will focus on selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and closely coordinate support of country

strategies that scale up proven, high-impact interventions.

Alliance partners hope to leverage and complement health investments already in place to achieve greater impact in less time.

“If we invest in the health of women and children, we ensure that families, communities, and nations thrive,” said Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “This alliance is an exciting opportunity for the foundation, and we look forward to greater collaboration in supporting policies and programs that will improve the health of millions of women and children.”

The effort will specifically address Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4, “reduce child mortality,” and 5, “improve maternal health,” where progress has been especially slow.

Estimates are that more than 200 million women want to use contraceptives but don’t have access to them. In addition, only half of the 123 million women who give birth each year receive

the care they and their newborns need before, during, and after delivery. Moreover, progress in reducing deaths has been slower for newborns than among children ages one month to 5 years.

system overall by improving policy, logistics, health worker effectiveness, and monitoring and evaluation. The Global Health Initiative focuses on leadership, governance, and

become a normal part of interacting with her clients. Training in post-abortion care has given her the skills to save women’s lives. By providing family planning services, she can also help women prevent future unwanted pregnancies, practice birth spacing, and reduce the risk of maternal mortality and morbidity.

“Post-abortion care is helping very much,” said Mathea. “It has improved the management of clients, not only those with incomplete abortion, but also others. People have understood about family planning, and my records show an increase in the number of family planning clients.”

“Family planning plays a crucial role in improving the health of women and their children throughout the world,” USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah said. “By bringing the comparative advantages of country partners and donors through this alliance, we will bolster health outcomes in countries striving to improve the lives and health of its women, girls, and newborns.” ★

“If we invest in the health of women and children, we ensure that families, communities, and nations thrive.”
—Melinda Gates

USAID currently funds family planning programs in more than 50 countries. In Kenya, for example, the health portfolio has a strong focus on bringing about sustainable improvements in maternal and child health, family planning, and reproductive health. USAID is working to strengthen Kenya’s health

capacity building of the Kenyan health system for greater sustainability.

For Milka Mathea, a nurse-midwife at the Jamii Medical Clinic in Namanga, Kenya, offering family planning counseling and methods to the women she treats for complications of unsafe or incomplete abortions has

POLICY from page 1

last month, unveiled his landmark global development policy, which for the first time elevates international development as the strategic equal to diplomacy and defense in U.S. foreign and national security policy.

The president’s policy also outlines a fundamental shift in focus in how, where, and ultimately, why, U.S. global development efforts are carried out.

In his speech, Obama recognized development as not only a moral imperative, but also a key element of national security policy, both strategically and economically.

“Let’s put to rest the old myth that development is mere charity that does not serve our interests,” he said. “In our global economy, progress in even the poorest countries can advance the prosperity and security of people far beyond their borders, including my fellow Americans.”

The directive formally elevates the role of USAID at the foreign policy table, where defense and diplomatic players had previously

dined in near exclusivity. And the president repeated what has become a familiar refrain from members of his administration—that USAID is being revitalized as the world premier development agency.

Speaking a day after the plan was announced, Administrator Rajiv Shah told reporters at the New York Foreign Press Center that he welcomed the announcement.

“I’m very excited on behalf of USAID and the whole administration because it really is a comprehensive and empowering roadmap for the future and one that is geared towards helping us make the kinds of changes in development we fundamentally need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” Shah said, referring to the focus of the U.N. summit—to mark progress on eight global poverty-fighting targets agreed upon by world leaders a decade ago.

At the United Nations, Obama explained that the U.S. government is shifting its development

approach away from focusing on the quantifiable delivery of aid materials, and towards how well its programs drive sustainable economic growth, and thus, development.

“For too long, we’ve measured our efforts by the dollars we spent and the food and medicines we delivered. But aid alone is not development. Development is helping nations to actually develop—moving from poverty to prosperity,” Obama said.

Shah added that USAID would focus on implementing the administration’s policy in four core areas: shifting focus to results and real outcomes; becoming more selective in where resources are allocated; enhancing science, technology, and innovation as powerful development tools; and prioritizing economic growth as a long-term development goal.

In his U.N. speech, Obama also reaffirmed the United States’ commitment to the MDGs, the time-bound targets set to expire in five years, but admitted efforts would have to

be redoubled if they were to be met by the 2015 deadline.

“A decade ago, at the dawn of a new millennium, we set concrete goals to free our fellow men, women, and children from the injustice of extreme poverty. These are the standards we set,” he said. “Today, we must ask—are we living up to our mutual responsibilities?”

Both Obama and Shah have highlighted core administration programs such as the Feed the Future and Global Health initiatives as models of how the U.S. development policy is already being applied with partner nations and other donors to help the greatest amount of people over the long-term.

“Instead of simply handing out food, our food security initiative is helping countries like Guatemala, Rwanda, and Bangladesh develop their agriculture, improve crop yields, and help farmers get their products to market,” Obama said at the United Nations.

“Instead of just treating HIV/AIDS, we’ve invested in

pioneering research to finally develop a way to help millions of women actually prevent themselves from being infected in the first place,” he said, referring to a landmark microbicide trial funded by USAID.

The new approach to U.S. global development efforts was roundly welcomed by the international development community, many saying they expect it will make U.S. foreign assistance more effective, but some also questioning just how such broad-scale reforms—ones that span agencies, countries, and agendas—will play out in practice.

For the Obama administration, however, the ultimate effectiveness test for U.S. global development efforts would be to reach the point where they can be halted altogether.

“The purpose of development—and what’s needed most right now—is creating the conditions where assistance is no longer needed,” the president said. “So we will seek partners who want to build their own capacity to provide for their people.” ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

RESEARCHERS PROBE TOXIC CORN'S POTENTIAL LINK TO HIV

By Joyce Turk

Can eating better corn—corn that is free of pest damage—help fight HIV?

Jonathan “Tim” Williams, director of the USAID-funded Peanut Collaborative Research Support Program (PCRSP) and Associate Director Carolyn Fonseca think the answer just may be yes.

The two agricultural researchers, along with others, are looking at new ways to curb the spread of HIV through improved food quality. This approach is based on the premise that some toxins in foods can hurt a person's immune system. The potential benefits are not limited to HIV epidemics, but also could significantly impact diseases like malaria and TB.

The hypothesis put forth by Williams and his team is fairly simple: Insect damage on corn allows a particular kind of fungus to grow. The fungus produces a toxin, or in scientific terms, a mycotoxin, called fumonisin.

In developing countries, corn is often contaminated with this toxin due to the limited ability to control pests. There is now growing evidence that, when ingested by humans, the toxin can increase the risk of infection by HIV.

The discovery of corn's link to HIV came about almost by accident, while PCRSP scientists were researching mycotoxins in peanuts, which also have high levels of these substances.

In a study published in the July edition of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Williams looked at the consumption of various foods across sub-Saharan Africa compared to mortality rates of most diseases. The study sought to explain the wide differences in HIV transmission rates across Africa as a function of diet.

In all 37 sub-Saharan countries that provided data, HIV transmission increased as corn consumption increased.

Although more research is needed, one plausible explanation for the connection is that corn produced without adequate insect control is commonly contaminated with fumonisin. This toxin has been linked to esophageal cancer in humans and, in animal studies, has been found to make body tissue more porous and thus more prone to disease transmission.

If the researchers' hypothesis is correct, then a few simple changes to maize production, such as improved pest control, as well as to processing methods that remove the parts of the grain where this contaminant is most concentrated, could markedly reduce the number of HIV infections. Williams and his team plan to continue to confirm the study's results.

Since there is good reason to eliminate mycotoxin in corn, as well as in peanuts, for other reasons related to crop quality and potential linkages to certain types of cancer, PCRSP researchers are also working on pest-management techniques to reduce their levels in crops and to improve milling and storage techniques.

The PCRSP, housed at the University of Georgia, is part of a long-term, multi-disciplinary research and training effort to address the problem of food insecurity and malnutrition in developing countries. It is funded through Feed the Future, the U.S. government global hunger and food security initiative.

The principal partners in this research and training are scientists from U.S. universities working with scientists in developing country universities, national and international research centers, the private sector, and NGOs. USAID currently supports nine collaborative research programs, involving 60 U.S. universities as well as academic and research institutions in more than 25 developing countries. ★

To read, Williams' research paper, go to www.ajcn.org/cgi/content/abstract/ajcn.2009.28761v1. Learn more about PCRSP and other CRSPs at www.peanutcrsp.org and <http://crsps.org>.



A Senegalese family sorts peanuts after a recent harvest. Some mycotoxins can be eliminated from peanuts through careful sorting to remove those of questionable quality. The Peanut Collaborative Research Support Program has conducted research showing the potential of proper manual sorting in reducing contaminated peanuts.

NUTRITION from page 1

leaders Sept. 21. The secretary was speaking at the “1,000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future” nutrition event held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

As part of the event, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah co-moderated a discussion on sustaining global commitment to the issue with Irish aid minister Peter Power, whose country has joined with the United States to spearhead the effort. Participants included representatives from Brazil, Ghana, Malawi, and Nepal as well as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.

“Child undernutrition has historically been—and continues to be—one of the most serious health and development issues we face today,” Shah said. “Our collective challenge is to harness this momentum and translate it into concrete actions, and support countries at the implementation level.”

The aim of the 1,000 Days event was to jumpstart global and country-level support for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Framework, which Shah helped launch in April. The SUN Framework, which promotes programs and sets policies to prevent malnutrition, has been



Left to right: Rajiv Shah, USAID administrator; Peter Power, Irish minister of state for overseas development; and Jay Naidoo, chair of the board at the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, at the “1,000 Days” nutrition event in New York Sept. 21.

endorsed by more than 100 leaders in the public, private, and civil society sectors.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened the event and launched the SUN “roadmap.” The roadmap suggests ways to combat undernutrition, including increasing the productivity of small farms, developing agriculture and health policy with nutrition in mind, and relying on local solutions that can be sustained long after donor dollars run out.

Nutrition is a major objective of both the Global Health and Feed the Future initiatives and is integral to USAID's development programs across sectors. Agriculture programs are designed to not only improve access to food, but to improve its quality. Humanitarian

assistance programs for the most vulnerable aim to prevent undernutrition—rather than treat it when it might be too late. USAID health programs deliver a package of holistic nutrition interventions—and maximize benefits to women

and young children by coupling these efforts with programs to strengthen water, sanitation, and health systems.

Experts are optimistic that a renewed commitment to food security and maternal and child health can curb widespread cases of malnutrition. “Two years ago, if you met a group of nutritionists and told them their cause would be taken up by... foreign ministers, major corporations, and civil society, they'd have been shocked,” said Josette Sheeran, executive director of the World Food Program. “But I think we're witnessing a revolution in our approach to undernutrition.” ★

For more information, go to www.thousanddays.org.



USAID
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SPECIAL REPORT: INDONESIA

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OCTOBER 2010

From Aid to Partnership, Indonesia-US Relationship Continues to Evolve

JAKARTA, Indonesia—After 60 years, Indonesia and the United States are taking a big step forward in their development relationship.

The USAID mission calls it a new way of doing business; Indonesians call it an evolving partnership built on a shared commitment to democratic principles.

At its essence, it is a slow move away from the United States merely providing aid in favor of the two countries working together to tackle issues of mutual concern and benefit, such as climate change, trade, emerging diseases, and education.

"It's no longer really sensible to think about Indonesia as a traditional development partner... because they are emerging on the world stage as a significant player in their own right," said USAID/Indonesia Office Director Walter North.

Indonesia is a collection of more than 17,500 islands whose combined land mass is three times the size of Texas. While most of the country is Muslim, making it the world's largest Muslim-majority country, there are small numbers of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and those who follow other beliefs. It has developed areas like Bali and Jakarta that attract international tourists, along with underdeveloped areas like Papua where traditional aid challenges remain.

Though the country won its independence from the Dutch 60 years ago, it has been defined by its more recent history.

President Suharto's forced resignation in 1998—after more than 30 years in power—as well as a devastating financial crisis that hit

Indonesia and other Asian nations in the 1990s, propelled the country toward a transition. Fueled by changing times, international aid, and a vibrant assortment of civil society activists, Indonesia began to embrace democracy and quicken its economic and social growth. USAID was a key player in the process.

The consensus today: Indonesia is moving to the next level in its development, one fraught with new challenges and ripe for grand advancements.

"Indonesia is at a very sweet spot in its development trajectory," North said. "We need to stay engaged to accelerate the positive direction the country is moving in and to consolidate the successes. To do that effectively, we need to change our business model."

Lukita Dinarsyah Tuwo, vice minister for Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency, says he is optimistic that his country can partner with USAID successfully while using its own resources to aid developing countries in the Asia region.

"The world is changing. Indonesia is also changing. USAID is changing," Lukita said in an interview with *FrontLines*. "Indonesia is a young democracy and we would like to strengthen as a democracy."

Post-Suharto decentralization has had a profound impact on the country, from the education and health sectors to judicial reform and political campaigns. And much of USAID's

see **AID** on page 8 ►



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton talks with USAID/Indonesia FSN Tri Linggoatmodjo in March 2009 as they walk through Petojo Utara, a Jakarta community that USAID has supported.

Photo by Danunurthi Mahendra, USAID

THE FSN FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

By Roman Woronowycz

JAKARTA, Indonesia—It is no overstatement to suggest that USAID's Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) are the core of the Agency's work and a key to its many successes in Indonesia.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah noted as much when he took the reins of USAID: "I know we can meet our goals because of people like Ms. Gartini Isa."

Comprising nearly 70 percent of USAID/Indonesia's workforce, FSNs at the mission are making things happen. From financial management to project implementation, their experience and dedication translates into success.

Gartini, a retired FSN from Indonesia, used 30 years of development experience to help nurture a new generation of Indonesian leaders willing to stand up for human rights. Today, others are following in her footsteps.

Tri Linggoatmodjo is working with underserved communities to increase access to water and sanitation for 1 million Indonesians. She has controlled a \$56 million budget, with 212 personnel, including six expats, working on her project. Raya Soendjoto started as a junior secretary. Twenty-nine years later, she is a program management specialist who oversaw the first commercial land project in Indonesia. Ratna Kurniawati has spent a career at the USAID mission helping improve health care in Indonesia. Edi Setianto started at USAID in the 1980s when the mission was helping with rural electrification. Today, he is helping to address clean energy challenges.

During an interview for the 60th anniversary of U.S. assistance in Indonesia, former Office Director Terry Myers noted that Indonesian FSNs played a particularly crucial role during the transformative period immediately after President Suharto resigned and the country prepared for democratic elections.

"USAID's Indonesian staff had wide-ranging contacts. Novy Kusdarman was able to arrange meetings with [political and civil leader] Gus Dur and assemble a roundtable of key members of Indonesia's media community to help shape a reconciliation campaign after ethnic violence threatened the recovery... Wouter [Sahanaya] helped



Photo by USAID/Indonesia

A double-span steel bridge is erected by the counterweight process over the Masen River in Aceh last January. Funded by USAID, the bridge is currently in use and nearing completion.

For more stories on Indonesia, see the online version of *FrontLines* at www.usaid.gov/frontlines.

see **FSN** on page 10 ►

Staving Off a Human Footprint Amid Natural Bounty

By Angela Rucker

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Indonesia's long list of environmental issues—in its cities, rural communities, and waters—are high on the worldwide climate change radar.

When it comes to the environment, the country is a superpower among nations—first in marine biodiversity, second in forest biodiversity, and, unfortunately, third highest in greenhouse gas emissions.

Another number to consider: By 2050, if current rates continue, the country will be well on its way to depleting its forest and fisheries, and that could translate into a substantial loss of livelihoods and dire food security issues.

Fortunately, Indonesia is taking needed action and USAID will be helping in the effort. Over the next four years, USAID will spend \$120 million on environmental programs in the country.

The aid, which dwarfs amounts from past years, comes as the globe is experiencing the consequences of what scientists believe is a dangerous warming of the planet—much of it caused by humans. Climate change and the resulting sea level increase will have a particularly large impact on Indonesia due to the

fact that it has over 17,000 islands and most Indonesians live on or near Indonesia's coastline. Also, because about 70 percent of Indonesians depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, the issue for the country is huge.

"I think we have a good shot at achieving something here, something meaningful, sustainable," explained Alfred Nakatsuma, the director of environmental programs at USAID/Indonesia. "But there are no silver bullets here."

USAID is working with Indonesia to tackle head-on a laundry list of green issues, including forestry, marine protection, water and sanitation, clean energy, natural disasters, and the causes and effects of climate change.

Protecting endangered animals like the orangutan and tiger, as well as the fast disappearing forests, is also on the Agency's radar. Unlike industrialized countries, Indonesia's emission of greenhouse gases comes mainly from deforestation. Therefore, conserving forests saves biodiversity and reduces the main cause of climate change in this country.

It wasn't that USAID hadn't been proactive earlier, but efforts were on a much smaller scale.

With these additional resources, USAID is in a position to make a significant contribution.

As Effendy Sumardja remembers it, USAID was a leader in protecting the environment in Indonesia in the 1960s and 1970s, though some of those efforts earned suspicion from Indonesians who were wary of the United States' motives.

Recalling the old days with a hearty smile, Sumardja, a former director of conservation at the Ministry of Forestry and now the country representative with the NGO Global Eco-Rescue, also credits the Agency and other international organizations with helping fledgling environmental efforts in the country take off, particularly with national park conservation efforts, and training a generation of environmental managers.

AID from page 7

work over the last decade has been to help smooth that transition.

"The country is on the right track, but I have to be cautious," said Wicaksono Sarosa, executive director of Kemitraan, an Indonesian organization that backs government reform and receives aid from USAID. The danger, he argued, is that people begin to refer back to the Suharto era favorably.

Kemitraan's Utama Sandjaja calls the first two or three years after Suharto "the euphoric stage."

Civil society advocates, who themselves have had to recalibrate from rabble-rousing to negotiating with government officials, worry that advances aren't coming fast enough for a watchful and formerly enthusiastic public.

Now it is up to Indonesia's leaders to deliver on their post-decentralization promises like

better schools and roads. Indonesians are heavy users of social media—comScore Inc. this year said Indonesians logged on to Twitter at home and work more than people from any other country—which they have used to call out corrupt police and bad politicians, and also to rally around unfair policies.

"You have huge explosions of democracy," said Kate Somvongsiri, the deputy director of USAID/Indonesia's Office of Democratic Governance. "Is Indonesia ready? There's a mixed response."

Corruption is a major issue that has yet to be tamed. The country also needs to improve the kinds of social indicators—birth rates, test scores—that are the hallmark of more developed nations. USAID will continue its assistance with those and other more traditional development challenges.

"There's an agenda," North said, "of helping Indonesia finish what it needs to do in terms of development for its own people: to improve social indicators, to create better living standards, to sustain Indonesia's rich natural resources, to make new democratic institutions work, and to deliver services through transparent, corruption-free government."

Still, from what it has learned and endured, Indonesia is positioning itself as a thought leader in democracy and governance, a model and guide for other countries in the region aiming to function more democratically.

"We've had an immense impact," added North. "Each successive generation has enjoyed a higher standard of living. That's something that I hope that people in the United States would take pride in." ★



Conserving forests reduces the main cause of climate change in Indonesia. Over the next four years, USAID will spend \$120 million on environmental programs in the country.

USAID also helped KEHATI (the Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation) get off the ground in the mid-1990s. The foundation has helped fund more than 5,000 biodiversity projects throughout the country, working with NGOs, think tanks, private companies, and other partners.

"And many of these programs are still going on," said Ismid Hadad, a former student activist of the 1960s who now heads KEHATI. "Saving forests from destruction and avoiding biodiversity losses is a long-term effort."

The foundation, which focuses on both the social and ecological sides of the environmental equation, started with about \$20 million from USAID. Fifteen years later, the endowment now stands at \$30 million and continues to fund many new projects every year.

Agus Widiyanto, a former USAID employee and now the executive director of Yayasan Bina Usaha Lingkungan (Environmental Enterprises Assistance Foundation), an organization that promotes renewable energy, said: "USAID's thinking was that there should be an independent, well-run, credible Indonesian institution to run environmental programs."

Added KEHATI head Hadad: "This is also a very unique contribution not only from the United States to Indonesian society to saving the environment, but also a

very fruitful and productive way of doing it [working in partnership]—on an equal footing."

As the greening movement has matured, so too have the efforts by USAID and Indonesian officials to find ways to protect the land and sea without destroying livelihoods and necessary commerce.

Today there are stronger laws that address logging concessions. USAID is also helping companies certify that the resources they remove from the country—be it trees to build furniture or palm oil to make candy bars—are eco-certified. And in August, officials announced a new climate change initiative—funded in large part by USAID and involving U.S. and Indonesian organizations—that will provide technical assistance to further improve the country's management of animal, sea, and plant life.

Paul Barber, a professor from the University of California, Los Angeles, a school involved with conservation of marine biodiversity, told *UCLA Today* that "Indonesia is the heart of the 'Coral Triangle,' a region that is known as the 'Amazon of the ocean' because it is the global epicenter of marine biodiversity."

The challenge, environmental advocates in and outside of government say, is keeping it that way. ★

US Education Pays Big Dividends

JAKARTA, Indonesia—In 1974, Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, a 26-year-old graduate of Indonesia's prestigious Bandung Institute of Technology, needed to make a decision—whether to further pursue studies in the United States, the United Kingdom, or the Netherlands.

Each country offered advantages and specific opportunities for study.

"I decided on the United States because it offered much more opportunity to learn," explained Mangkusubroto. "Most importantly, I wasn't just going to pursue intellectual development. The most important thing was to get to know the culture and what has made America great. That's why I joined the USAID Participant Training program."

With USAID support, Mangkusubroto completed studies at Northeastern University in Boston and Stanford University in Palo Alto, attaining a master's degree in industrial engineering.

Mangkusubroto, now 63, is one of several dynamic figures transforming Indonesia into a global leader. Many of them were educated in the United States through USAID support. Mangkusubroto currently heads President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's monitoring and oversight office, which addresses corruption issues. In the past, he headed the Aceh-Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency, which successfully oversaw the huge international post-tsunami rebuilding effort in Aceh. He has also served as minister of mines and energy.

Perhaps the most successful of all USAID programs in Indonesia, Participant Training has a long and storied history. More than 11,000 Indonesian students have been sent to the United States over the years to obtain masters degrees and PhDs in a wide spectrum of fields: agriculture, engineering, administration, management, urban planning, and national resources among them.

Many of the participants have become high-level government officials, including Mangkusubroto, Indonesia's Vice President Boediono, and former Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani, today man-



Kuntoro Mangkusubroto

aging director of the World Bank.

Mangkusubroto explained that Participant Training gave him the skills and experiences to help him achieve success. He emphasized that it wasn't just the academic process that provided him with benefits.

"When I was at Northeastern, three-quarters of my fellow students came from abroad—India, Costa Rica, China. At Stanford, it was the same. I learned a great deal about different cultures," Mangkusubroto said.

His U.S. experiences paid off handsomely during the rebuilding of Aceh, where as head of the international relief and recovery effort, he had to effectively incorporate the work of 900 foreign organizations with different cultures and different languages.

"How do you coordinate all this? If your experiences were narrow, there would be no way you could deal with this," Mangkusubroto said.

The importance of his engineering education in the success in Aceh was clear: The recovery effort involved the rebuilding of 140,000 houses, 3,000 kilometers of road, 1,200 schools, 1,700 village clinics, seven airports, and four harbors.

The latest iteration of Participant Training, the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) program, began in 2007, providing more Indonesians an opportunity for U.S. study in graduate and post-graduate programs or short-term technical training in the environmental field, health, and clean governance.

While previous USAID participant training programs were mostly directed at government officials, HICD more widely provides scholarships to Indonesia's young future leaders, whether in academia, NGOs, or the private sector. Participants have come from all across the country, representing 75 percent of provinces. ★ — R.W.

Graduating from Family Planning to Maternal and Child Health

JAKARTA, Indonesia—

Tati (Indonesians often use a single name) worked as a government-employed midwife for many years before deciding to go private. She believed there was a better way to more fully and adequately care for the pregnant mothers who were her patients.

Midwives like Tati are still widely used for birthing assistance in Indonesia and are too often poorly trained. Experts maintain that one way to reduce the country's high maternal and child mortality rates is to provide them with more knowledge and better guidance.

What Tati didn't foresee when she left the public sector was that the private sector also offered no additional opportunity for quality training and guidance. She also now felt disconnected from her fellow midwives. Then Tati heard about Bidan Delima, a program managed by the Indonesian Midwives Association that was created by USAID.

"When I was a public midwife, I felt tied to a system. When I went private, I felt lost," explained Tati. "Now I am tied to a network of other private midwives."

Today, a sign outside Tati's business identifies her as a member of Bidan Delima. She said that people associate the Bidan Delima brand with healthy and safe birthing practices.

Bidan Delima, established in 2003, is not so much an organization as an affiliation of private midwives that ensures quality service standards, and provides training, access to information, and a forum for the members. Today, 8,000 of Indonesia's 30,000 midwives draw support from it.

They are part of a family planning effort in Indonesia that has drawn international plaudits for its success. It is a program for which USAID can take shared credit.

After Indonesia's population doubled in the 1950s and 1960s, the government undertook a national family planning program, with USAID as the country's principal partner in the effort. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Agency provided over \$15 million annually for training and local initiatives as well as establishing a reliable supply of contraceptives. USAID-supported programs helped Indonesia reduce its fertility rate from

5.6 births in the mid-20th century to 2.6 births by 2007.

As the Indonesian government achieved successes, reaching a contraceptive use rate of almost 62 percent, USAID graduated its assistance in family planning and focused more heavily on maternal and child health.

High maternal mortality rates in Indonesia are a continuing problem. USAID has introduced concepts of quality and improved life-saving skills among midwives. One program has helped families and communities plan for a safe delivery in the event of complications or emergencies.

USAID also supported a program that taught mothers and birthing experts how to prevent the most common causes of maternal and newborn deaths.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation funded an expanded immunization program in 2006-2009 that increased coverage of five mandatory immunizations and improved the cold chain system for safe vaccine delivery. The vial monitoring system, which USAID originally funded,

see **HEALTH** on page 10 ►



Midwife Tati is standing before a sign that identifies her as a member of Bidan Delima.

POST CONFLICT BREW: A \$25 MILLION HIT

By Angela Rucker

TAKENGON, Indonesia—That morning cup of premium coffee that Americans pay top dollar for at the corner café may have started out half a world away.

Specifically, in Takengon, a city of about 30,000 tucked in the central mountains of Aceh Province, several hundred small coffee farmers have revived abandoned coffee fields with USAID assistance.

High-end coffee bean buyers like Starbucks, Green Mountain, and others are willing to pay top dollar for the berries from this region because professional tasters, and everyday drinkers, say the coffee has something special—a unique characteristic of earthiness, body, and richness that other beans don't provide.

The revival started in 2005, after a long-standing conflict in Aceh province ended, an outcome supported by USAID conflict mitigation efforts. "We looked for a local cooperative that was very inactive because of the fighting," said Joselito Bombeta, an enterprise development advisor with the National Cooperative Business Association, USAID's implementing partner on the venture.

Separatists looking to secede from the government had been active here—so much so that roads were too dangerous for travel after about 4 p.m. and many farmers moved away to escape the violence. "During the conflict time, most of these people went down to Banda Aceh. Then, unfortunately, the tsunami came," Bombeta said.

Left behind were small, untended coffee fields rich with potential. Some had produced coffee during Indonesia's colonial period. Restoring the economic viability of the land fell in line with USAID/Indonesia's \$11 million enterprise development and employment generation project for the tsunami impacted areas of Sumatra. The effort supported the re-establishment of businesses in Aceh that could quickly provide opportunities for increased rural employment.

The cooperative recruited about 600 farmers in the first year of the project and provided them the seedlings and technical know-how to revive their coffee farms, each about a hectare, with space to grow 1,200 coffee trees. By 2007, the number of farmers in the cooperative had grown to 3,000, and today the figure stands around 8,000.

With few other employment options in the area and almost certain financial rewards, coffee has taken off here.

"What the buyer says is Sumatra coffee is very important because of its unique characteristics," says Bombeta.

The quality of the beans comes from a number of factors: they are grown at an altitude of 1,200 meters (just under 4,000 feet), experience a climate with



Workers at a coffee processing plant in Takengon, Indonesia, pick out the poorest quality beans before the best of the coffee undergoes further processing and export to coffee companies in the United States. When the beans are of high quality, as much as 4 tons can be processed each hour. The machine runs a bit slower when the beans aren't as good.

165 days of rain, are minimally processed, have a shorter fermentation period, undergo a longer drying time, and are almost entirely manually sorted.

Working through the cooperative, USAID helped get farmers started with seedlings—provided on credit—as well as rice, cooking oil, and other food staples to tide over families until the coffee cherries could be harvested. On average, it takes two years for farmers to revive their coffee harvests and get them to market. Farmers have three years to repay loans for seeds.

The cooperative also operates its own processing facility close by the coffee farms where the beans are dried, separated by quality, and prepared for shipping out of the port several hours drive away near Medan. Four tons of coffee beans are processed each hour.

Sorting coffee beans by hand with spot-on precision and speed, 25-year-old Masdini Binty Ridwansyah says the job, which she has held for a year, helps cover daily household costs for herself, her husband, and two young sons who are in first and third grades.

She has also joined the cooperative's savings and loan society, a perk for the women and men who work at the processing facility and the farmers in the field. The processing facility also includes a health clinic and nursery.

In the first two years of production, all the exported coffee beans were sold to Seattle-based Starbucks. Today, 12 major U.S. companies purchase the coffee, which is both organic and Fair Trade Certified.

About 95 percent of the coffee grown here is exported to the United States, with \$25 million

in purchases over the last five years.

With the profits from the sales, coffee farmers have been able to literally grow their businesses, returning some of the profits to the soil that produces such unique beans. And even though it is known by the exclusivity of its coffee, the region is branching out into patchouli—a plant that provides the fragrance for many perfumes—through a similar system of farmer-cooperative associations.

And there are still enough fallow coffee farms to double production from the current 5,000 hectares. That could generate even more income for the formerly displaced farmers.

The good news, says Bombeta, who downs eight cups of coffee a day and knows of what he speaks: "There is a big demand." ★

HEALTH from page 9

ensures that vaccines are transported and stored within a specific temperature range to retain their effectiveness.

Other child survival efforts have included diarrhea control through clean water and hand washing, zinc therapy, support for polio eradication, and improved nutrition practices such as breast feeding and vitamin A fortification.

In the past decade, USAID has worked closely with the

Ministry of Health to standardize clinical and managerial skills for medical providers, a benefit that private medical providers are also feeling.

Tati, the private sector midwife, said that much has changed and there are large differences in how her practice looks today. "The quality and standard of care has increased tremendously," she said.

Today, Indonesia is seriously committed to achieving the

Millennium Development Goals, the eight poverty-reduction targets agreed upon by world leaders a decade ago, including those regarding child and maternal health. Midwives will be critical to this effort. USAID has also made a substantial commitment to work with the Indonesian government and the private sector to continue to improve the quality of maternal and child health services. ★ — R.W.

FSN from page 7

establish a group working on peace in Ambon," said Myers.

Many of USAID/Indonesia's FSNs have continued to work after service with USAID. Martin Sirait started at the Agency in 1976 as an FSN-5. With time, he became an expert in monitoring and evaluation. He left in 1990 as an FSN-11 and went on to become a special adviser to the Indonesian Parliament. Martin now runs a consulting firm.

Carlina Patuwo, who started at USAID in 1988 as an FSN-7

secretary, now owns her own human resources consulting firm. And Harry Azis, a mission economist and program manager in 2002 and 2003, today is a member of Parliament.

Gartini is now retired but her contributions remain. In 2009, she received one of the Agency's highest honors, the John Withers Memorial Award. The USAID office in Indonesia has recognized her achievements as well with a conference room named in her honor. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

BRIEFS

MDG Goal May Be Out of Reach

NEW YORK—The United Nations World Food Program issued a report last month that said the number of undernourished people in the world decreased this year for the first time in 15 years, the *New York Times* and other sources reported. However, the level still remains higher than before the 2008 food crisis, and the volatile state of prices gives cause for unease, the report said. Overall, the number of hungry people fell to 925 million from the record high of 1 billion in 2009, with much of the improvement tied to income growth in the Asia-Pacific region and to a 40 percent drop in food prices from their 2008 peak.

750,000 Children Saved from Malaria

WASHINGTON—The Roll Back Malaria Partnership said in a report last month that measures such as the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying, and preventive malaria treatment during pregnancy have saved the lives of almost 750,000 children in 34 African countries over the past 10 years, Agence France-Presse reported. The

report said that 3 million more people could avoid malaria by 2015 if funding for programs continues. The World Health Organization estimates that malaria kills 1 million people annually, most of them in Africa.

Displaced Somalis Face Food Shortage

MOGADISHU, Somalia—All Headline News reported that the Elman Peace & Human Rights Center has condemned Islamist insurgency group al Shabaab's decision to ban international aid agencies from Somalia. As a result, internally displaced people are now facing food shortages. Relief agencies working inside Somalia say aid to millions of Somalis is hampered by the danger that aid workers face as well as a lack of respect for international humanitarian law by insurgents and other fighters.

Pakistan Still Suffering Effects of Flooding

GENEVA—UNICEF warned last month that flood-stricken areas of Pakistan are facing a looming threat of child malnutrition, Agence France-Presse reported. More than “10 million children [have] been affected by the flooding, including 2.8 million under-5-year-olds,” according to

UNICEF spokeswoman Marixie Mercado. Unless the children receive food immediately, conditions for those affected will deteriorate, the group added. UNICEF said the overall health situation was broadly under control for now. Heavy rains in July sparked off the worst humanitarian crisis in Pakistan's history, affecting an estimated 20 million people.

Access to HIV/AIDS Treatment Increases

WASHINGTON—A report released last month by the World Health Organization, the U.N. Children's Fund, and the Joint U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS said the number of people who got access to treatment for the AIDS virus rose to 5.2 million in 2009, an increase of more than 1.2 million from 2008, or the largest increase yet in any single year, the *Washington Post* and other news sources reported.

However, the report covering 183 nations said that only one-third of those in need worldwide have access to life-saving antiretroviral drugs, “despite accelerating progress,” Agence France-Presse reported. The report noted that certain countries, such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, have made marked gains in access to drugs

over the past year.

The authors of “Towards Universal Access” also estimated that most people with HIV were still unaware that they were infected—about 60 percent of people in low and middle income countries.

Iraqi Refugees Receive Food Aid Via Phones

Cellular-News.com reported that the U.N. World Food Program electronic food voucher system has moved beyond its pilot phase. The system, called Damascus, is being expanded to “tens of thousands” of Iraqi refugees in Syria. Roughly 9,600 families are now able to receive U.N. food aid by exchanging coupons sent to their mobile telephones. Under the first-of-its-kind program, refugees receive a code through text message that enables them “to cash in all or part of the virtual voucher at selected government shops.” The texting program began last October with 1,000 refugee families in the Lebanese capital.

Cholera Breaks Out in West African Nations

DAKAR, Senegal—Doctors Without Borders announced what it is calling an alarming number

of new cholera cases in the West African nations of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, according to the Associated Press. “Nigeria experienced its worst cholera outbreak in 19 years [when] 13,000 were sickened and nearly 800 died in two months,” the report said, adding that the outbreak then spread to neighboring countries where more than 300 people died. UNICEF says Cameroon is suffering the worst outbreak of cholera in 20 years.

Nations Press Donors to Fulfill Pledges

NEW YORK—The Group of 77, which includes representatives from developing nations, said the world's rich nations are failing to fulfill their commitments to increase financial aid, and stressed that developed nations are responsible for challenges like global warming that the poorer nations are now grappling with. The group spoke out during a day-long meeting at U.N. headquarters during the U.N. General Assembly in September.

From news reports and other sources.★

FRONTLINES: OCTOBERS PAST

1970: A total of 60 Greyhound buses are slated for shipment to Nigeria and Korea for inter-city transportation and package delivery services under a joint venture between Greyhound and local businesses in the two countries. Under an investment guaranty agreement, USAID insures Greyhound's overseas investments—a financing mechanism that the Agency had employed with over 80 other developing countries. Greyhound will also ship trucks, tractors, jeeps, and

parts to its new transportation partners. Total cost for the Nigeria project is \$1.1 million and, for Korea, \$1.2 million, reported the Oct. 8 *FrontLines*.

1980: The Oct. 16 edition of *FrontLines* tackles the question of how many countries exist in the world by stating that Coca-Cola is served in about 135 countries, the United Nations has 153 members, and the United States has diplomatic relations with 146 countries. After exploring how the term “country” is defined, and presenting an example of Pitcairn Island, whose 1970 population

was calculated at 70, the article concludes that there are 213 countries in the world, with the caveat that with “changing populations, borders and unique political situations, an ultimate, definitive country total is likely always to be a little out of reach.”

1990: The Agency begins transporting food and supplies to Liberia's civil war-torn capital of Monrovia amid dangerous conditions reports the October *FrontLines*. Although Disaster Assistance Response Teams had deployed to the region in July and September,

ongoing fighting made aid efforts difficult, preventing relief ships from docking in Monrovia. Assistance is provided to the neighboring countries of Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone for delivery to refugees. U.S. assistance reaches more than \$50 million to the country whose water system ceased functioning in May.

2000: The October/November edition of *FrontLines* is dedicated to the global promotion of democracy, with articles on Poland, Indonesia, Nigeria, Central Europe, and Zimbabwe.

Sens. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) each contribute an article on the transformative power of democracy around the world. USAID Administrator J. Brady Anderson notes that while “democracy is not a guarantee against conflict,” its components, “in particular, a strong rule of law, an honest judiciary, an independent news media, transparency in government, and free and fair elections—allow the majority to govern without trampling upon the rights of the minority.”★

THE REGIONS

ASIA



Photo by Krishna Gopal, IFDC

Jahangir Howlader applies *guti* briquettes in his paddy field. The technology increases farmers' rice output and also saves them money in costly fertilizer.

Fertilizer System Revolutionizes Rice Farming in Bangladesh

By Mark Visocky

KASHIPUR VILLAGE, Bangladesh—Jahangir Howlader remembers it like it was yesterday. In 2007, Cyclone Sidr tore through southern Bangladesh's rice growing area, wiping out his crops and those of his family, neighbors, and friends. His vegetable gardens were washed away, large trees used for timber were scattered, and his house was badly damaged.

"After Sidr, when I saw that I did not have any crops left on my land, I thought that I lost my life," said Howlader. Rice plays a key role in food security and income generation for small-scale farmers in Bangladesh.

Paradoxically, the devastation caused by the cyclone opened Howlader's eyes and mind to a new and more profitable way of rice farming.

Howlader received a visit from a team of extension agents from the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) who were promoting a fertilizer method known as urea deep placement (UDP). USAID, IFDC, and Bangladeshi farmers now are scaling up this technology to smallholder rice farmers as part of President Barack Obama's new Feed the Future initiative, which calls

for collective global action on agricultural development and food security. The goal is to reach 2 million farmers in five years and increase rice yields by 67 percent.

Using this method, farmers place a mini-briquette, called a *guti*, near the roots of the rice plant, rather than spreading urea over the surface of the soil as is done in the conventional method. The *guti*, which is the size of a mothball, slowly releases nitrogen throughout the growing season.

The technology allows for better absorption and efficiency of the fertilizer while reducing runoff, and decreases the release of volatile greenhouse gas. Only one application of *guti* briquettes is needed, compared with three applications of conventional fertilizer.

Howlader listened to the extension agents and decided to give the UDP method a try. To his surprise, his crop yields increased by 25 percent—and he saved money on expensive fertilizer.

Howlader is now spreading the good news about *guti* fertilizer to all his neighbors, and hosted a field day promoting it to farmers and local extension workers. Most farmers in his area are now using

the technology on their own fields and cultivating larger yields than before. They are also saving the environment from damaging pollution and greenhouse gases, and, to date, they have saved the government \$1.4 million on fertilizer subsidies.

In two years, this USAID-supported project has reached over 400,000 farmers. Using UDP briquettes, fertilizer savings can reach 40 percent, and yields have increased by as much as a ton per hectare, leading to as much as \$200 in additional profits per hectare.

What started as a hopeless situation in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr gave Howlader a new lease on life. He has become an "agricultural leader" in his community and is eagerly teaching others, especially women, so they may become socially independent. His farm now has livestock and a fishpond, all resulting from the larger income he has earned from a little product the size of a mothball.

"I cannot give money to others, but I can give good advice to help raise production. This advice will benefit people now and in the future. Maybe they will remember me and my name for this advice," said Howlader. ★

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Theater Empowers Afro-Honduran Women in HIV Battle

By Samantha Croasdaile

COROZAL, Honduras—Yilian David and Nanigui* are no ordinary Garifuna women.

At first glance, they appear to fit traditional homemaker roles—cleaning house, cooking meals, and watching children. But David and Nanigui are much more than that. They are members of a new group of female leaders who are powerful voices in their communities for HIV prevention.

USAID has worked to prevent HIV/AIDS in Garifuna communities for 12 years, and in the last five has helped create community theater groups to spread HIV/AIDS-prevention messages throughout the north coast of Honduras. Participants studied acting as well as scriptwriting.

Now they act in a series of performances—including three radio soap operas containing HIV-prevention messages targeted at youth. While successfully raising awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention, the theater groups also give community members, especially women, an opportunity to discuss HIV/AIDS prevention in a more comfortable setting.

In 12 years, not only has the HIV/AIDS incidence in the Garifuna population declined from 8.4 percent to 4.5 percent, but HIV/AIDS awareness has become a platform for developing women's leadership.

"I became part of the theater group when I was very young," David said. "The program taught me not to sit with my arms crossed waiting for something better to come along, but rather to go out there and make it happen."

"The Garifuna have a strong oral tradition, so theater is a great way to get information out to people. In the last few years, we've used theater to deal with other issues as well, like environmental problems and keeping kids in school and away from drugs."

David has won several national theater awards. She's a celebrity among the Garifuna. As a widely recognized role model in the commu-

see **HONDURAS** on page 15 ►



Photo by Perla Alvarado, ULAT-HCH

Yilian David on stage during a theater performance

EUROPE & EURASIA

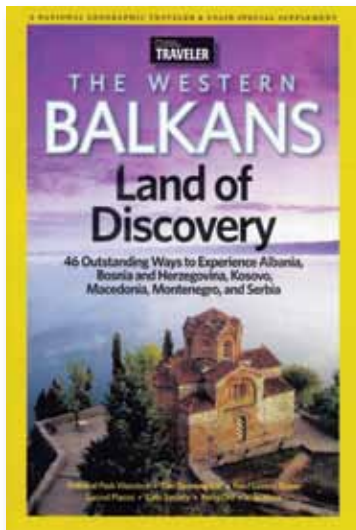
Balkan Tourism Gets National Geographic Nod

By Stephanie Pepi

Albanians are working hard to attract foreign tourists to their beautiful beaches, mountains, and scenic locales to experience the country's unique culture and history.

The invitation would have been unimaginable 18 years ago when Albania was one of the most isolated countries in the world, with no political allies and a highly centralized economy.

Coming off 50 years of politically imposed isolation, Albania has had difficulties overcoming negative stereotypes related to poverty, corruption, and crime created in the aftermath of the mid-1990s. In 1997, financial pyramid schemes collapsed that toppled the government, laid waste to the country's already struggling economy, and prompted the influx of international peacekeeping forces. And, unlike some of its Balkan neighbors, Albania has had to address significant disadvantages, namely its poor infrastructure, unplanned urban development, and lack of investment. Until recently, Albania had



This summer, *National Geographic Traveler* magazine published a special supplement on the Western Balkans that highlighted some of the best places for tourists to visit.

the lowest level of foreign direct investment in the region.

Today, Albania is a much different place. Strong macroeconomic policies and government reforms have led to substantial

see **ALBANIA** on page 14 ►

MIDDLE EAST

Doors Open for Next Generation of Journalists

By Amira Taha

Aspiring Algerian journalist Toufik Bougaada has always had a knack for writing, but he lacked the operational knowledge and resources to share his skills widely. Thanks to a USAID-sponsored program, Bougaada is able to reach out to a larger audience.

Bougaada was one of 13 active or aspiring online journalists selected from news publications in the Middle East and North Africa to participate in the recent Arab Online Journalism project, which was funded by USAID's Office of Middle East Programs and implemented by the American University in Cairo's Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research. The project provided training, mentoring, and a regional network to help journalists present more professional and balanced reporting to the public. Participants attended a series of workshops over 18 months.



Workshop participants speak with Yosri Foda (far right), former Al Jazeera chief investigative correspondent.

"Thanks to the project, I now have a blog concerned with freedom of expression and human rights," Bougaada said in his native Arabic, proud of his achievement.

During the workshops, participants received training in basic journalism skills, multimedia technology, and blogging as well as specialized reporting on subjects like civil society, business and finance, science and health, sports, and entertainment. They also shared their observations and analyses of journalism in their countries and praised the idea of

bringing Arab journalists together.

The journalists came from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

The project also included a meeting of 16 participants from 14 countries outside the region to discuss common challenges and lessons-learned with their counterparts from the Middle East and North Africa region. Topics ranged from establishing blogs, the use of technology to evade censorship, and the relationship

see **JOURNALISTS** on page 15 ►

AFRICA

Nutrition Helps Liberian Children Recover from Kwashiorkor

By Lisa Katelyn Hendricks and Justin Prud'homme

GBARNGA, Liberia

—When 3-year-old Sennie* arrived at the Phebe Hospital on July 1, she was lethargic and despondent. At 18.7 pounds, she was dangerously underweight and her blue dress hung loosely off her skeletal frame as she clung to her frightened mother.

Sennie had to be carried inside the hospital because she could barely walk on her own. Her thin shoulders and arms contrasted with her bloated and puffy face; the severely swollen and cracked skin on her legs showed unmistakable signs that the little girl was suffering from kwashiorkor.

Kwashiorkor is a dangerous and widespread form of childhood malnutrition caused when diets are excessively high in carbohydrates and low in protein. Sennie had been surviving on a diet consisting mainly of white rice, cassava, and oil. A lack of protein in her diet caused her to develop an abnormal accumulation of fluid beneath the skin of her legs, stomach, and face.

Sennie was identified by one of the 2,400 locally trained Liberian health workers through a collaborative effort between USAID's Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS),

see **LIBERIA** on page 15 ►



Sennie upon arrival at Phebe Hospital



A healthier Sennie after four weeks of treatment for malnutrition

Photos by Mark Chapelle

CONTINUED...

BARTH from page 2

BARTH: Well, it's always been the centerpiece of USAID's strategy—when you invest in a girl, the return on that investment is many-fold.

We know that educated girls are more likely to become productive members of society. From an economic perspective, their earnings will be substantially higher. The agricultural yields for women working in agriculture are substantially improved by every additional year of education. These girls delay marriage; they delay sexual activity; they have healthier families.

Getting girls into school and making sure that they're taught properly is a very inexpensive way to solve a number of the problems that bedevil the developing world.

Q: Achieving universal primary education is the second MDG—Millennium Development Goal. What progress has been made on this front since the MDGs were established a decade ago?

BARTH: I need to be a little careful here, because I'm a skeptic, a little bit, on the MDGs, particularly on MDG-2.

We spoke about the fact that getting kids into school is an important pre-condition to their learning, but getting them into school is not enough.

Numbers get celebrated all the time in terms of the progress that's being made—only 72 million out-of-school kids down from over 100 million.

We still have a moral obligation to those 72 million children. And that question still neglects the hundreds of millions of children who may be in classrooms not learning or who may be dropping out, maybe because the systems themselves are not proving useful to them.

So while we have made progress toward achieving MDG-2, that alone is not enough.

Q: So what, then, is USAID doing to see kids through to higher education?

BARTH: There's an urgency in parts of the developing world for basic literacy and numeracy. But in the countries we want to see move along the spectrum towards graduation—countries that are going to be our trading partners and help provide geo-political

leadership—they are going to need a workforce that can compete in a globalized world with 21st century skills, including access to and a good understanding of the uses of technology. And that's something you get in secondary and higher education.

One interesting thing we're seeing is countries that invest in lower-secondary education are seeing much higher rates of success through primary. So families that see a viable, useful secondary education will keep their kids in school and make sure they achieve. That alone is a persuasive argument for investing further along the education spectrum.

The core of our program is still focused on the early grades. But that's not in any way minimizing the importance of secondary school and higher education. And when appropriate—where the data drives us—we'll invest in that. Higher education institutions are vital laboratories for innovation and the source of the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders. This is why we invest so heavily in university partnerships. This has the effect of strengthening the research capacity of universities as well as improving their sustainability.

There is an urgency to deal with the fact that we've got 1.7 billion young people transitioning into adulthood, the so-called "youth bulge." These young people have the potential to be the fuel for the engines of economic growth around the world as we move forward. They can also be a terrible drag if they're not provided the skills and the opportunities for constructive engagement.

So some of that will come from secondary education; some of that will come through vocational; some of it will come through higher education, but it is an issue that clearly has to be addressed.

Q: Perhaps one of the unsung accomplishments in Afghanistan has been getting girls back into the classroom.

BARTH: Yes, absolutely. I think it's a virtual miracle. During Taliban rule, not only was education forbidden for girls, but it was discouraged for most boys. And the boys who did go to school were not getting the kind of education that would

prepare them in any way to be meaningful, global citizens.

We've seen a growth in the amount of kids in school from just under 900,000 to almost 7 million within a decade. Roughly 40 percent of these newly enrolled students are girls. So we've gone from zero to 40 percent girls enrolled in schools in Afghanistan. It's an amazing thing. That's unprecedented and it's a remarkable achievement and a tribute to a lot of hard work from very dedicated professionals in a very hard environment.

We spend a lot of time thinking about what's not working, but I think it's important to spend some time thinking about how impressive these types of achievements really are.

Q: So the goal—10, 20 years down the line—is to see real gains in Afghan society?

BARTH: Yes, of course: both economic and political. The data supports our investing in education—education being the foundation to success in all the other sectors. You're not going to have viable democracies unless you've got people who can read and understand, who will know how to distinguish between political parties, who are then capable of meaningful participation in civil society.

Afghanistan is going to continue to be primarily an agricultural society. We know that investments in education have concrete, measurable returns on yields. And so we believe strongly that the move to get more Afghan children into school is a major investment in long-term stability and health in the country.

Q: What are some examples of how innovation is being used for education?

BARTH: We're finding ourselves at the very earliest stages of what's going to be a technological revolution in education. And though we really can't anticipate exactly what the classroom of the future is going to look like 20 or 30 years down the road, we can be prepared.

And that means support for cutting-edge research, trying to find solutions to the barriers we encounter in education. In order to educate a child, you need to have an adequate classroom. You need

someone or something to teach that child. You need appropriate materials and you need an effective and supportive education system.

All of those things are going to be impacted by technology. How we get that child to school, how learning takes place—through radio or online via the Internet. These will all be radically affected by technology. Fifty years from now, are children going to be carrying backpacks full of

textbooks to and from school? Will a classroom still look like the classrooms of our memories? I highly doubt it.

I believe strongly that innovations in technology will seriously transform the economic model of schooling. And while we can't predict each of these transformations, we can be supportive and position ourselves to take advantage of the innovations as they come. ★

ALBANIA from page 13

growth and improvements in the country's business environment. The government recently launched a series of large-scale infrastructure projects to promote trade and investments.

Albanians have identified tourism as an important sector of the country's economy, with the potential for generating jobs and income. In coastal southern Albania, villagers already rely heavily on income generated during the summer months when tourists visit in large numbers.

USAID is helping to promote Albania's image as an inviting and unique tourist destination at both the regional and country levels. Officials say Albania's rich diversity—including rugged mountains, quaint towns and villages, varying cuisines, and high mountain lakes—is largely untapped. And it seems the esteemed National Geographic agrees.

In June, the *National Geographic Traveler* magazine published a 47-page supplement on the Western Balkans, described as "one of the most magical places in the world." Marketing to a European audience, the supplement showcases some of the Balkans' most unique and hidden treasures, providing glimpses into the rich history, cuisines, and cultures of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

Two of Albania's UNESCO World Heritage Sites are featured, introducing readers to the beauty of the country's national parks and 2,500-year-old archaeological sites that were significant trade posts and cultural centers in Roman times.

"The Balkans has a lot to offer for foreign tourists," said Joseph C. Williams, USAID's Albania office director, "and National Geographic has done a great job promoting the type of tourism that

can be accessed year-round and is vital for the sector to contribute to broad-based economic growth in Albania."

To support this effort, USAID/Albania's tourism project is promoting the booklet widely, working with Albania's National Tourism Agency and the Ministry of Tourism to encourage regional tour packages for the coming year.

USAID and some ministries of tourism contributed funding for production of the supplement. The high-value media exposure is expected to generate increased revenues from tourist dollars. According to National Geographic, the magazine has a circulation of 715,000 throughout Europe, potentially putting the feature on the Western Balkans in the hands of at least that many people.

In 2008, USAID/Albania also teamed up with National Geographic to produce a documentary television series on Albania's Northern Alps. The mission also supported U.K. publishing house Thomas Cook in developing a comprehensive guide on Tirana for its City Spots guide series, and invited journalists from Lonely Planet and other international publications to see first-hand what Albania has to offer.

USAID is now helping tourism businesses meet quality standards so that tourists enjoy their stay in the region and want to come back.

Additionally, the project is working with the Albanian Tourism Association to develop the first Quality Mark system in Albania, which rates accommodations and other tourism businesses in the region. The system works with tour operators to improve their business acumen and marketing capabilities. Businesses that meet certain standards receive a seal of approval to denote superior status. ★

HONDURAS from page 12

nity, David fully understands the importance of positively influencing and inspiring others.

"I have a lot of responsibility because people are constantly judging what I do," said David. "I believe that people know they can make a difference because I have shown them they can."

Since she began participating in community theater, David graduated high school and received a vocational degree. She still volunteers in her community by spreading HIV/AIDS-prevention messages, organizing community development groups, and using theater to address other important social and political issues.

Nanigui also lives in David's community. She is a stay-at-home wife, mother, and grandmother, who has been married to her husband for 33 years.

Her roles shifted when she decided to attend a theater performance dealing with HIV/AIDS. That first performance changed her life.

"Through the HIV/AIDS program, I met women my age who were just like me, but I also met other women who had dared to be different and voice their opinions in their communities. I chose to be a woman who voices her opinion," she says.

Knowing that her husband had another partner, Nanigui took action. She said: "I know that for Garifuna men, having more than one sexual partner is traditional, but he was putting my life at risk. I got tested for HIV/AIDS, and my result was negative. I told my husband that I would stay in the relationship only if we always have protected sex. My husband agreed."

In a community where speaking about sex is taboo, Nanigui openly talks to youth groups about her life decisions. "When I speak to young people about my choices, their first reaction is disbelief. Here is a grandmother telling them to protect themselves and practice safe sex. It's a big shock for them, but at the end of my story, many come to talk to me and ask for advice."

In 1986, USAID officially began implementing groundbreaking HIV/AIDS programs in the developing world just two years after HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was isolated and identified. More than 20 years later, the Agency has programs in nearly 100 countries, and works in partnership with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an initiative announced in 2003 to stem the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS. It is the largest such program in the world, providing HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment.

In Garifuna communities, USAID works with over 200,000 people, teaching them behaviors that reduce the risk of infection. It is currently opening new theater groups and working with schools to spread prevention messages among youth. ★

**Name changed for privacy reasons.*

JOURNALISTS from page 13

between journalists and governments.

"The trainings helped me produce a documentary on political naturalization in Bahrain, and it was aired on the website of *Al Wasat*, the newspaper I work for," said Bahraini journalist Ali Al-Alaiwat. His video, which is controversial in Bahrain, has become the story of the hour thanks to the camera and editing classes he received.

In addition to the trainings and to further the impact of the project, five distinguished mentors—including editors-in-chief, a senior news correspondent, and a university professor—guided journalists in their stories between the workshops and after the sessions ended.

"The project affected me a lot in dealing with political

analysis," said Yemeni journalist Ghamdan Al Yosifi. As a result of the USAID-funded workshops and mentoring, participants have become professional online journalists and several have established their own balanced blogs and websites.

While many countries worldwide have gone through, or are in the midst of, a transition toward greater press freedom, the Middle East and North Africa region continues to show the lowest regional ratings, according to the "2010 Freedom of the Press" report by Freedom House. The need for regional projects to help journalists and bloggers express independent, balanced views is seen as crucial by USAID to ensure better governance and transparency. ★

LIBERIA from page 13

the Liberia Integrated Assistance Programs, and implementing partner EQUIP. The worker helped Sennie and her mother get to the closest hospital, a 90-minute drive away.

RBHS is a five-year program that works to improve access to quality health care for 1 million Liberians in seven counties. Among other things, the program is upgrading and equipping existing health facilities, training personnel, providing equipment and essential medicine, and fostering community partnerships.

It is also working to treat victims of kwashiorkor. If left untreated, the illness can lead to serious complications such as enlargement of the liver, dehydration, and severe infection due to a weakened immune system. Without medical attention and a healthy diet, Sennie and others

like her would likely die from this preventable condition.

At the hospital, Sennie was fed and treated alongside other children suffering from malnutrition.

After just four weeks, Sennie gained 3.8 pounds, and returned to her community. Her mother followed up by enrolling in a program to learn healthy feeding habits from community families with well-nourished children.

In many parts of Liberia, good sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals are limited and costly. Through USAID's programs and the efforts of its implementing partners, children, mothers, and even some fathers in seven Liberian counties learn how to best use their limited resources to better the health and nutrition of their families and communities. ★

**Name changed for privacy reasons.*

PAKISTAN from page 3

to provide their children with a healthy and stable learning environment.

"We are thankful for such an activity that will improve the schools in which our children study. We want our children to study well, and I know they are also eager to learn," said Sultan Mahmood, chairman of the Parent Teacher Council at the participating government high school in Kokaray.

Over the next year, ED-Links will work to improve as many as 150 schools in the Malakand Division. The initiative began in August, and 10 communities have already seen improvements made to their schools.

"We want education for our children, and our children also want education," said Shahid Wali, a community member. "We are grateful for this activity." ★

FRONTLINES

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"I realize that there are among us those who are weary of sustaining this continual effort to help other nations. But I would ask them to look at a map and recognize that many of those whom we help live on the 'front lines' of the long twilight struggle for freedom—that others are new nations posed between order and chaos—and the rest are older nations now undergoing a turbulent transition of new expectations. Our efforts to help them help themselves, to demonstrate and to strengthen the vitality of free institutions, are small in cost compared to our military outlays for the defense of freedom."

—John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, March 13, 1962

Moira Whelan

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Public Affairs

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SPOTLIGHT ON IRAQ

Microfinance Helps Rebuild Iraq's Most War-torn Town

By David DeVoss

FALLUJA, Iraq—The Salah family was just sitting down to lunch when a group of masked Al-Qaeda gunmen burst into their home. The family was shackled and beaten because one of them worked for the Falluja police.

The gunmen later dragged the family from the house, ordered them to leave the city, and then blew up the house, crushing the taxi Salah Mohammed Abdul-Razak used to make a living.

The family did not leave town. Abdul-Razak was so outraged by Al-Qaeda's actions that he joined the police force like his relative. But rebuilding his life was a more arduous process that only began to improve last year when he met Dia'a Ali Hadi, a 33-year-old loan officer working for a microfinance organization called Al-Takadum.

Al-Takadum is one of 14 microfinance institutions

supported by USAID's *Tijara* Provincial Economic Growth Program, which continues to rebuild Iraq one business at a time. The loan capital is especially appreciated in towns like Falluja, which prior to the Sunni Awakening in 2005, was repeatedly plagued by terrorist attacks and random violence that left over half of the city's 50,000 commercial buildings and a quarter of its houses seriously damaged.

When USAID established the nationwide microfinance program in Iraq back in 2003, the goal was to help Iraqis rebuild homes and small businesses damaged by terrorist violence. As of June, more than 212,000 Iraqis have received a total of \$487 million in microfinance loans.

It only takes minutes walking with Hadi along a busy street to realize that he may be



the most popular man in town. Tradespeople leave their shops to shake his hand. Business professionals embrace him to kiss both cheeks. Grocers rush toward him with handfuls of proffered produce.

"Falluja today is a city where one person can make a real difference," Hadi explains. "There's an Iraqi proverb that says 'One

hand can't clap alone.' Those of us working in microfinance are the other hand—a helping hand—that enables the people of Falluja to improve their lives and achieve their dreams."

In two and a half years, Hadi has approved more than 650 microfinance loans, allowing city residents to start new businesses and rebuild shattered homes.

One of these loans went to Amer Sultan Muhammad, who owns the Zarzoor Restaurant. Famed for its Iraqi kebab, the Zarzoor fell on hard times from 2004 to 2008, but Muhammad's recent investment of \$248,000 to renovate the building and buy new furniture and kitchen equipment has paid off with a 300 percent increase in business.

"Three years ago, the people of Falluja hesitated to gather in restaurants because of the prevalence of IEDs [improvised explosive devices]," explains Muhammad. "Today, they are confident enough to eat Iraqi kebab with their families and enjoy a normal life."

Abdul-Razak's life certainly is better. A \$2,000 microfinance loan helped him to buy a car and start rebuilding his house.

"I'm glad my family stood firm and did not allow Al-Qaeda terrorists to take control of the city," he says. "My police salary allowed us to stay but it was the microfinance loan that made it possible to rebuild." ★

Dialogue with Officials Eases Unrest in Iraq

By Jordan Sellman

BABIL, Iraq—Until recently, direct citizen participation in government decision-making was a rarity in Iraq. But provincial leaders have started to recognize the benefits of dialogue with their constituents.

"We were neglecting citizens before, because we were busy with our work inside our offices only, but we became closer

to citizens through our regular meetings with them. Actually, we thank LGP III [for facilitating] our meetings with citizens by making meetings open," said Kadhum Majeed Toman, Babil provincial council chairman. LGP III, or Local Governance Program-Phase III, is a USAID-supported program designed to strengthen the performance of local government

institutions, helping them to better represent citizen priorities and create a more responsive public administration.

Rather than spark conflict, as the provincial leaders had worried, dialogue with constituents has actually defused tense situations.

In one recent instance, a large group of boisterous demonstrators congregated outside the Babil provincial council's office to protest a chronic lack of electricity. Instead of ignoring the pandemonium and waiting out the protests in the safety of his home or office, as he might have done at one time, Toman ventured out to address the crowd. He listened to their grievances and requested that citizen representatives join him and the governor in the provincial council hall to voice their concerns.

"Instead of sitting behind our desks to sign applications only, we work in the field to solve citizens' problems, and we make our formal sessions open for citizens to attend, following the good advice of the LGP III advisors," said Toman.

LGP was launched in 2003 as one of the mission's flagship programs. LGP III began in January 2009 and assists government officials to meet directly with citizens and solve most problems immediately through public meetings. It also supports a new law, informally known as the "Provincial Powers Act," which spells out the structure and responsibilities of provincial governments.

This dialogue with demonstrators—which Toman learned through LGP III—turned what could have become another ugly riot, like one on essential services

that occurred days earlier in Basrah, into a productive meeting between government officials and their constituents.

As a result, the council and citizens reached an agreement that everyone was pleased with. The council amended a decision concerning the operating hours of generators, requiring local generator owners to operate the equipment for up to 12 hours per day.

Then, the council restricted use of the national electrical grid emergency line, which supplies constant power to all essential facilities in the province—hospitals, jails, and the water department. By taking non-essential departments and official government residences off the emergency electricity line, citizens could tap into more power.

As a result of these decisions, citizens experience fewer power outages.

"This is the first time that I [have felt] we as citizens are equal in rights with government officials," said tribal leader Sheikh Hassan. "Immediately after the demonstration, the government's decision about the electricity cut-off program caused the power supply to improve for everybody. We look forward to other improvements." ★



Babil provincial council chairman Kadhum Majeed Toman addresses demonstrators.